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CHILDHOOD

When the baby is from a week to a few months old, his mother or his maternal grandmother pierces his ears. To do this she applies something hot to the ear and then punctures it with a strong thorn or a sharp bone. The child learns "to hear things sooner" and obeys more quickly if this is done promptly. "When the ears are not pierced, the child cannot be controlled; he will be wild and go to the bad. It is believed that children grow faster too if this is done." Pendants of white beads or turquoise are strung from the ears of very young children, and this mode of ornamentation continues throughout life.

Sexual intercourse between a man and his wife is not resumed until the child has been weaned. During this period of almost three years the couple is expected to remain continent. Actually some men contrive to "sneak around" and "find easy women" with whom to have relations. But social pressure operates to enforce this rule of continence strictly in the majority of cases. A man so importunate as to demand connection with his wife too soon is subject to sharp criticism and is said to have acted "against" his growing child. "There is a man whose child is not walking yet, and his wife is pregnant. The Indians think he is no good. We are ashamed to have a second child on the way before a first is weaned."

Because the mother's milk supply has been stopped or altered by her new pregnancy, the nursing infant is "starved" and upset and is likely to become a weakling. In such an emergency another minor rite is arranged:

> There's a hair-cutting ceremony that I'm going to tell you about. Let us say a child is only a year old and the mother is pregnant again while that child is still nursing. Then the little child that is only a year old is sick; it has stomach trouble. Something must be done for that child.
>
> When this happens, the mother usually takes the child to an old woman or someone who knows what to do. This old woman cuts the child's hair and puts red paint over the child's body. Then she gives it some kind of medicine.

Polygyny, though it is not widely practiced, exists, and a man with more than one wife "is in a good position, for when one of his wives is pregnant or has a nursing child, he can go to the other."

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name of the child of the one he is addressing. In discussing anyone, great care is taken to say nothing critical or abusive concerning him before his parents or his children. One man told of a series of fights he initiated by uttering the remark, "Your father is messy around the ankles." He knew very well in advance what the consequences of that observation would be. In a Coyote story the trickster, after being skinned and jeered at for having a "red shirt," retaliates against his tormentors by shouting, "It's your father who has a red shirt!"

Despite the affection and regard which mark the parent-child relationship, it must not be forgotten that discipline and authority are the prerogatives of the father and mother. The daughter, especially, is conditioned to lifelong obedience to parental edicts.

Four terms, the equivalents of father, mother, son, and daughter, serve to express the parent-child relationship. The term for father can refer to no one else. The mother, likewise, is distinguished from her siblings. The parent-child terms differ from others of the kinship system in two particulars. First, they are not self-reciprocal; that is, the same term that is addressed to the son by the father cannot mean father when the son is speaking. Second, each term expresses one relationship only and is not extended to include collateral relatives.

Uncle, aunt-nephew, niece relationships.—Of tremendous importance in the child's life are the maternal uncle and aunt. The mother's sister is likely to be present at the child's birth. She may volunteer to nurse the baby if she has milk and the mother has not enough. She is a permanent member of the mother's extended domestic family. A girl will have intimate contact with this relative throughout life; a boy, at least until his marriage and departure from the encampment. In case the mother dies, this woman may be called upon to adopt or care for her sister's children. She may elect to marry their widowed father[11] and so become their stepmother. Or, since sororal polygyny is practiced, if she is younger than her sister, she may become the second wife of her sister's husband and, by a different route, attain the

[11] See pp. 421–25.

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[604] position of stepmother to these youngsters.[11] Her very closeness [587] to her sister, the fact that these girls have played and worked to- [595] gether since childhood, establishes her interest in the development of her sister's children. The chances are that she will per- [431] form protective ceremonies for them, that she will give them [574] food and presents, that they will be frequent visitors in her home, and that she will offer them economic assistance in times of need.

[881] At the puberty rite of her sister's daughter, she will give gen- [584] erously of her labor and provisions. When her niece is about to marry, she will doubtless act as one of the group of relatives who passes on the desirability of the union; she will help erect the dwelling to which the husband will be brought; and she may [583] furnish household necessities. When her nephew marries, her household will contribute to the gifts to be presented to his [868] bride's relatives. The degree to which she participates in the instruction of her sister's children will vary with her own proficiency. If she knows a great deal about the medicinal value of plants, it is quite likely that she will transmit that information to her sister's daughter as well as to her own girls.

[591] Somewhat different are the relations between the child and the mother's brother, for he resides with the extended domestic family only until he marries. If he is considerably younger than the mother, he may be around during the entire childhood of the individual; if he is older or near her age, he may depart while the [574] child is yet very young. But even after he leaves the encampment through marriage, he frequently visits his parental home. [596] At first, to his wife's relatives, he is a stranger and an unproved acquisition. He is bound to many of them by obligations of [602] avoidance, restraint, and economic assistance, but the warmer bonds of kinship and prolonged common residence are lacking. [851] Therefore, until he has children of his own and his status among his wife's relatives is established, he is likely to keep in closest touch with his own blood kin. There is a good deal of restraint

[601] [11] When a woman marries her deceased sister's husband or becomes her sister's co-wife, the stepmother term may be used as a self-reciprocal between her sister's children and herself, or the mother's sister term may be continued. The first is the more common practice.

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842 827 648 595 Not long ago the idea that a child may have more than one father was introduced in a legal dispute. A man had been practicing polygyny with two sisters. Since plural marriages are banned by white edict, only one of these women could be registered as his lawful wife. When the other became pregnant, the problem arose of how to answer the queries of the agency officials. Finally, the woman blamed another young man for her [837] condition, and, since he admitted having had intercourse with her three times, it seemed that he would be punished and be forced to support the baby. It was here that native doctrine was invoked. A legally minded brother of the accused man proved to the superintendent that the "secret husband" had been having relations with this woman and asserted that the child belonged "more to that man than to anyone else." It is doubtful that the superintendent understood the latter statement, but he was enough impressed by the testimony concerning the woman's irregular conduct to reduce the threatened punishment.

826 833 With the theory of blood accumulation goes a concept of blood exchange. The primary result of sexual intercourse is to add male blood to the store of female blood. The condition of the generative blood of the man is modified by his age and the state of his health. The blood accumulated within a woman has two special characteristics in addition. First, it is associated somehow with the menstruum. Menstrual blood is most dangerous to [841] men; contact with it brings, at the least, rheumatic joints. [753] Therefore, men fear it and avoid intercourse with menstruating women. Second, a woman's blood is in a special category because, if she is promiscuous, her augmented supply represents the contributions of many men of dubious soundness.

826 833 753 This fully explains the warning to young men against tampering with older women of bad reputation. Evidently, it is suspected that during intercourse the man's genitals may come in contact with the woman's blood and that any disease which it carries can be thus transmitted to him. Tuberculosis, for instance, has been considered communicable in this way:

> In the time before my day and my father's day, the Chiricahua didn't know what tuberculosis was. They knew that sometimes a man's stomach got bad and

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With divorce, each person takes his own belongings without fuss and goes to his and her old home. This did not often happen. The woman has little power to stop a divorce if her husband wants one. Even if she doesn't want a divorce her husband can get up and leave. If the woman wants to leave and the man doesn't want her to, he can try to hold her by force. But she can usually get away to her parents' home. 586

Impotence as well as frigidity may be an important factor in divorce decisions: 586 833

When a man can't get an erection, it is attributed to witchcraft. If it can't be cured, this might be the real reason back of a divorce. [1054]

If a woman marries an impotent man, she may stay married to him for wealth or something, but most likely they would separate.

After divorce, though a man must continue the avoidances and polite forms which his marriage brought into being, the material hold of his former wife's relatives is at an end: 586 602 606

If a man is determined to divorce his wife, or if she insists on divorcing him, the parents-in-law cannot very well stop it. All the obligations of the man to support the woman's family stop at divorce. He cannot be made to marry any sister or girl cousin of his wife at any time in the future.[1] But avoidances and polite forms go on. Both the man and the woman are free from each other and from each other's families as soon as the divorce has gone through, as soon as they have separated. They can each marry as soon as they wish again then. [595] [587]

The presence of children acts as a decided brake to divorce action. "In the old days it was pretty hard to get a divorce when there were children. It was not often done then." 586

If, in case of divorce, the mother's relatives are willing to contribute to the support of the children and the mother is willing to maintain her household, this is considered the best solution. Though there is no definite rule, there is the feeling that children should be under the care of the mother and her kin during their formative years. Babies who are not yet weaned always remain with the mother, and, in general, very young children are likely to stay with her. Sometimes older children, particularly boys, are claimed by the father. When the man can charge that the woman is at fault and has not been a fit parent, public opinion and the pressure of group leaders force acquiescence on the part of the wife and her relatives. [626]

[1] For a discussion of the sororate see pp. 421–25.

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156 Every now and then a woman would be expert with the bow and could make arrows and a bow. This is exceptional though. Two women here could do everything like a boy when they were young. D. could ride well, make a bow and arrows, and was a real athlete. She has been married. Her husband died just a few years ago. She has never had children, but her husband was married before and had two children by his first wife.

[838] These women, though they are more interested in masculine pursuits than the average woman, are not considered transvestites. [868] All girls are urged to be strong and fast. It is simply accepted that these particular individuals have carried the requirement further than is strictly necessary. Their preoccupation with such things was confined primarily to their youth. They have married, have accepted the woman's role in all essentials, and in old age are not distinguishable in dress or behavior from others of their sex and years. The attitude of those discussing them is never one of ridicule or condemnation but rather one of admiration.

838 True berdaches are rare, and their emergence is definitely discouraged. The last one of whom I have a record died before 1880:

P. and S. had a brother who was like this. He never married. He died in Old Mexico. This man talked and walked like a woman, sewed clothes, and made moccasins. He didn't make baskets though. He went where the women were all the time. He hardly ever went where the men were playing at hoop and pole, and he himself never played it. Instead he played the stave game with the women. Such people were never treated with any great respect by us. We just laugh at them.

POLYGYNY AND SORORAL POLYGYNY

• 595 [773] In a coyote story a white man whom Coyote deceives is said to have two wives. The polygyny with which this alien is credited is really practiced by some men of the tribe:

In the old way a man can have more than one wife. Of course, he isn't expected to take more than one wife if he can't afford it. If he isn't a leading man or a good warrior, he shouldn't do it. A common man is criticized for it. It is the wealthy men who have more than one wife. A man can have more than two wives. It depends on a man's position and whether he can provide for them.

When a man takes a second wife, it is usually a sister or relative of the first. But this is not always the case. Perhaps there are no more girls in that family, or there are none of the right age. [602] [606] If the women a man marries come from different families, he has to hide from both his mothers-in-law and keep up the avoidances and polite forms for the relatives of both those women.

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There is no real ranking of wives, though the first, because she is usually older, might have more to say. The wives live in one encampment but in separate households. When a man has two wives, the one he married first is called "she who sits first." The second wife is called "she sits on her." It really means that she is going to help, to sit next to the other woman. That's how we feel about it.

N., a leader who died about ten years ago, had two wives at the same time. He had them right through the time we were at Fort Sill. The wives and children got along well. He had children by both women, and they lived in peace.

595 601

When there is more than one wife, the children of one call the children of the others *šiKis* and *šilah*. If a second wife is the sister or cousin of the first, the children of one call the other woman "aunt" and are called "niece" and "nephew" by her.

If their father's other wife is no relative of their mother, they call her "stepmother."[6] The husband calls the children of both of these women "son" and "daughter." The real mother calls her own children "son" and "daughter" too.

595

If a man marries a second sister, he does not have to give more presents. If he marries outside his first wife's family, he does have to give presents though.

The subject of plural wives drew this statement from an elderly man:

Most men have one wife. . . . . The limit is about five. If a man can afford it, he might have more, because there is no rule, but the greatest number of wives I ever heard of is four or five, and the greatest number I've actually known about is only two or three. Just because a man marries the eldest of several sisters, he has no claim on the others. Of course, he might marry a sister of his wife if he is ready to marry again and both are willing.

When a man has more than one wife, the first wife is respected more than the others, providing she has children. She acts like the boss and can order the other wife around. If the first wife has no children and the second one has, the second wife would probably be liked better, and in time the first one might be divorced. If one of a man's wives dies, the other wife or wives help to raise her children. They are not adopted by anyone else.

[586] [597]

Though all agree that sororal polygyny is preferable, there is some difference of opinion concerning the strictness with which the rule should be applied. A strong feeling for the custom is expressed thus: "A man can have more than one wife. If there is one available for him, he has to marry a wife's sister if he takes a second wife. He marries the oldest sister usually. They all live

[6] One term, a self-reciprocal, means both stepmother and stepchild, woman speaking.

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595 in the same dwelling. If one has a baby, he sleeps with the one who has no baby."

595 602 The motive force toward sororal polygyny, of course, is the obligation which the man owes his first wife's parents. Should they permit him to marry a second wife from another family, they would, in effect, be agreeing to share his time and services:

> If a man wants a second wife, he is not free to marry anyone who appeals to him. His first obligation and duty are to his wife's family. If his wife has any sisters or female cousins who are eligible, he would have to marry one of them rather than go outside the family. If he wants to marry outside nevertheless, he has to get permission from that family. He would never make such a request unless he suspected that the family does not care much about him anyway. Even if the wife's family does not have any eligible girls, as a matter of courtesy he should state his intentions and ask permission. The great obligation of a man to his wife's family guides him in all his actions. Therefore, the second wife is usually the sister of the first.

595 But, for one reason or another, it is often impossible to establish sororal polygyny:

> Sometimes a man takes the sister of his wife as his second wife. But it does not always happen that way. It's pretty well divided. N. had two wives who were not sisters. Another man has two wives who are sisters. There are a good many cases where the women are not sisters. C. had three wives at one time. One is left now. They were not sisters. G. had four at one time; none of them were sisters.

595 609 195 Whether sororal polygyny can be arranged depends in large measure on the ages of the wife's sisters when the husband joins the family and on the relations which they initially establish with him:

> If the sister of your wife wants to, she can hide from you. Usually she doesn't do this though. She can use polite form to you if she wants to. If she starts this, you probably will never marry her, at least while your wife is alive. Only a grown girl would use the polite form to you. Using the polite form is not a matter of liking a person only; it is a matter of respect. And when you have this respect relationship between you, you aren't going to get friendly and intimate to the point where she can become a second wife.
>
> But if a sister of your wife is quite young when you marry and she doesn't use polite form to you and grows up around you, sees you without your shirt, and under all conditions, she isn't going to use polite form to you when she grows up. She is too friendly with you for that. Then you can marry her all right. . . . .

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The manner in which interest in the wife's sister develops to the point where sororal polygyny occurs has been convincingly described: 595 609

I don't know whether I would marry my wife's sister, too, under the old conditions. It depended on a man's wealth, on whether he could support more than one woman. The intimacy grows up gradually. Maybe you get familiar with her in secret. Then it comes out into the open, and, if your wife thinks it is all right, you marry her sister too. That's how it was with a man I know of. Now he doesn't care. He walks to the store with that other woman [his wife's sister, his second wife].

The other day my wife and her younger sister were going to the creek for water. I went along. The sister did something, like poking me in the ribs. I picked her up and made believe I was going to throw her in the creek. My wife was pouring water down my neck. I didn't think anything of it because we are always cutting up like that. My wife didn't either. I thought no one was around. Then I noticed that a lot of people were watching. I felt pretty much ashamed and let the girl down.

Just to show you how it works: My wife had a sister, now dead, who used to want to go around and camp with us. I didn't know it, but after a while my wife told me that the people were saying that I had two wives. The old man, her father, heard of this first and didn't want the sister to go with us any more.[7] He told his wife, and she told my wife. My wife said she didn't care, that it wasn't so, but that even if it was so, it would be all right. You see the idea is still pretty strong. My wife's sister didn't care what they said either, and she didn't stop going around with us.

I think this is the way those double marriages came about in the old days. It was a gradual thing growing out of intimacy, and nothing was thought about it. It was possible because sisters were together so much, and an unmarried girl, if there wasn't any hiding or polite talk to interfere, would be around her sister's home and see her sister's husband all the time.

There seems to be no unalterable usage governing living arrangements when a man has more than one wife: 595

If there are two wives, sometimes each has a separate dwelling and sometimes not. All eat together if they are living in the same dwelling; if not, each woman and her children eat separately. The man divides his time between the women. The first wife has authority and the favored position. [264]

According to the testimony of another man, the "wives live together in one camp, with the first wife having rights over the

[7] This man, the father, was himself practicing sororal polygyny at the time.

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595 second woman." Another commentator, however, feels that separate households for wives is the more usual state, especially in times of peace, although "sometimes in wartime they are in the same house because of the danger." In all probability adjustments are made to needs and particular situations. The size of the family and the degree of cordiality existing between wives have much to do with the determination of living arrangements.

595 554 Leadership and wealth come with years and experience; therefore, a man is not likely to take a second wife until a good many years after his first marriage. This may account, in part, for the absence of serious friction between co-wives. The older woman normally has shared her youth with her husband, has borne him children, and has attained status and a good deal of control over the family before the second wife enters the household. She often welcomes the newcomer for the assistance the arrangement will give her with the household duties. Sometimes it is at her instigation that another wife is taken. Since only leaders and wealthy men can afford to have more than one wife, polygyny is not widely practiced. No more than 20 per cent and perhaps only 10 per cent of the men would be able to undertake such responsibilities.

THE SORORATE AND LEVIRATE

587 [192] At the death of a wife or a husband, the surviving mate is spoken of as "one who has become *ica*." The word *ica* does not yield to linguistic analysis, but it has the force of "bound to" or "under the control of." Those who exercise the control are the relatives of the deceased spouse. Those to whom the surviving partner is "bound" (in the sense that they may request marriage of him or her) are the dead person's siblings and cousins of the same sex. Of the terminological usage one informant explained: 587 196 "A man shouldn't say of another man, 'He is "bound" to me.' He should say, 'He is "bound" to us,' meaning to the whole family. But a man can be 'bound' to a woman." Another said of the word: "When you say, 'She (he) becomes "bound,"' you mean that the person is a widow or widower, but is not free."

587 The substance of the sororate and levirate has been defined thus:

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595 The sororate does not become operative when one of a man's co-wives dies, even though the two women were not sisters. It is then considered that a man's obligations are to his surviving wife and her relatives:

N. was an Eastern Chiricahua. He had two wives. One died. The one who died had sisters, but they had no claim on him, because he had one wife left. He lived with this one wife until she died. This last woman had no sisters, so he lived on single for many years before he died. The "bound to" relationship does not apply when a man has more than one wife.

587
602 Theoretically, a bereaved man is supposed to accede without dispute to the wishes of those to whom he is "bound." But actually he or his relatives may resist these dictates, and, if his case is a good one, he succeeds in gaining his freedom:

If they offer me my sister-in-law after my wife's death and I don't like her, I do not go to my wife's family myself but I get a relative of mine whom I trust. I say to him, "My brother, my mother-in-law wants to give me her daughter, and you know what kind of a girl she is! Her sister was a very different sort of woman. I had a good home with her and I worked well. But with this girl it would be different. She would make trouble for me and perhaps I would make trouble for her. She runs around with men and doesn't work hard."

Then my friend will go to my mother-in-law's house and bring back word from her. If the old lady is convinced, she will say, "My son-in-law lived well with my daughter and we like him. This other daughter is not the right kind for him. He is sensible and is doing right. We would be glad to keep him in the family, but I don't blame him at all. I leave it to him." Then I am free to marry as I want to.

Just as often the man is willing enough to marry his wife's relative but waits in vain for the summons:

D. was married to T.'s oldest girl. This woman died. He wanted then to marry another girl of the family, the sister next in age to his dead wife. The old folks wanted to arrange it that way, for it was according to the old customs and D. was "bound to" them. But the girl didn't want to. This girl is dead now. There were no other daughters old enough. She considered him too old and ugly, I guess. The girl thought she could do better by passing up that old custom. It was up to them to give him a girl or to free him. The old people didn't want to force the girl, so they had to let him go.

So important is the sororate that it may override any restraints which avoidance or polite form has imposed:

If the wife's sister or girl cousin avoids a man and at the death of his wife she wishes to marry him, she could roll a cigarette, take a few puffs on it, and send it

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622 554 556 upon a young man of rank are likely to assure him more than the ordinary share of gifts and products of the raid. His marriage connections will probably also be of the best. The tie between leadership and wealth is a close one:

If a man gets a lot of cattle, all his friends and relatives want to help him and live off him; and so such a man is respected. Everybody wants to help him and be his friend. He may butcher an animal for the whole crowd occasionally. He becomes a leader. If he has many horses, all his friends use them; they thus put themselves under him, and he becomes their leader. A leader has to be rich anyway in order to give feasts. An important leader has four or five wives, and he takes care of them. In general, he has the best of everything.

[595]

622 554 555 Exceptional bravery sometimes elevates a warrior to rank even though his antecedents are ordinary:

A man who has done great deeds in war may be looked on as a leader when he comes back, even though he is not of a leader's family. A prisoner who has grown up with the Chiricahua and has accepted the life might even become a leader if he is brave and successful enough.

622 The functions of the leader are varied:

In case of war a leader heads the men when they go to battle. In time of peace he acts as adviser. He has charge of the group as far as camping, living conditions, and water supply are concerned. He advises the men about the hunt, where to go and how. Besides being an adviser and commander in war, the leader is also a peacemaker on occasion. If there should be a murder and the leader finds it out, he and some assistants saddle their horses, ride out among the camps, and work for peace so that there will not be any trouble. If the leader is not present when the act occurs, there may be a lot of trouble. The people try to fix it up peaceably; if not, trouble continues and there may be a long family feud.

[627]

[431] The leader is supposed to talk to his people. He is supposed to be sympathetic and tell them how to live, sympathetic in the sense of giving out horses and valuables to those who need them. The leader is supposed to give something to eat to everyone who comes around. He has control in time of war. You can't disobey him. The leader advises the people to help the unfortunate, to give to those whose luck is bad. He advises against fights in the camps; he doesn't want any quarrels within the group.

[756] He advises the people to be on the lookout all the time. He may request that a ceremony be performed by a shaman for the benefit of the men during a raid. If the leader is advised by the shaman as a result of such a ceremony to do this or that, he carries out what the power tells him to do. A man must be wealthy and have a big following to be a chief.

[556]

Nothing special is done when a man becomes a leader. People just take it for granted. He talks then. He gives speeches on public occasions.

2: Castetter and Opler N, E-5 (1931-1934) 1936
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would ask a kinsman to act as intermediary for him in seeking the girl's hand. This "go-between" would visit the girl's parents' encampment, offer presents, and seek to make the necessary arrangements. If the girl's relatives approved the offer, the girl and her mother erected a dwelling in the vicinity of the parental home, and the union was recognized as soon as the boy took up residence with his new wife. Sororal polygyny was permitted, and the young man, if he proved a successful hunter and good provider, was encouraged to marry the younger sisters of his wife as they matured. Both the sororate and the levirate were practiced. A man could be forced to marry a sister or female cousin of his dead wife, and the woman could not refuse her dead husband's brother or male cousin if he wished to marry her. At marriage the Apache man was obliged to observe an unusually large number of avoidances and special forms of speech in respect to his affinities. Among others, the Mescalero man avoids his mother-in-law, her mother, her mother's sisters, and her sisters. In addition to avoiding his wife's female relatives, the Chiricahua man is called upon to avoid his father-in-law and may be requested to avoid other of his wife's male relatives. More distant relatives of the wife might request a special form of address known as "polite form" instead of avoidance. Where a choice is possible and avoidance is requested of a man by the affinity, it signifies great love for the girl through whom the relationship has been established and approval of the match.

The Apache man who enters the extended family through marriage is expected to work unremittingly for his in-laws. All the game that he kills in the hunt is brought to his wife who carries it to her mother's home for utilization and distribution. Whatever parents-in-law command or suggest, a son-in-law is expected to perform.[3]

3. For the details of the Mescalero and Chiricahua kinship systems see Opler (21).